

Applic. No. 10/801,964
Amdt. dated January 25, 2006
Reply to Office action of November 25, 2005

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 10-12 remain in the application. Claims 1-9 are being cancelled herewith.

In item 5 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-6 have been rejected as being obvious over Damkjaer (U.S. Patent No. 5,305,869) in view of Rasmussen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,992,994) (hereinafter "Rasmussen") under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 1-6 have been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection is moot.

In item 6 on page 5 of the Office action, claims 8 and 9 have been rejected as being obvious over Rasmussen (U.S. Patent No. 5,992,994) in view of Damkjaer (U.S. Patent No. 5,305,869) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection is moot.

In item 7 on page 6 of the Office action, it appears that claims 10 and 11 have been rejected as being obvious over Rasmussen (U.S. Patent No. 5,992,994) in view of Damkjaer (U.S. Patent No. 5,305,869) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

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As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 10 calls for, *inter alia*:

three suction boxes each disposed at a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes having guide elements for the conveyor belt.

The Rasmussen reference discloses a support system only having one conveyor belt (62). A print media (32) is held on the belt (62). As shown in Fig. 3 of Rasmussen, the belt (62) is led over two support rollers (66 and 68). Guide shims (80 and 82) and a roller (84) are disposed laterally to the support rollers (66 and 68) and help secure the print media (32) outside of the printzone. The print media (32) is in web form. As shown in Fig. 4 of Rasmussen, the support rollers (66 and 68) are replaced with a height adjustable support shoe

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(95). The support shoe (95) does not include a vacuum, which is why the belt (62) does not include any vacuum openings.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's comments on page 6 of the Office action, that Damkjaer discloses three suction boxes with three guide elements. More specifically, Damkjaer discloses an endless chain link conveyor with a support surface (2), which includes rows of interconnected chain links (1). The chain link conveyor is used for conveying items such as tins, cans, buckets, or canisters. Because these items are not flexible, the support surface (2) must be flat (Fig. 2). Displacing or deflecting just one chain link (1) from a planar position is not possible because the objects would not be reliably held on the surface (2). This is even more critical when the objects are placed over a joint between two of the links (1). The links (1) are provided with openings (17) and vacuum is supplied to all of the links (1). Damkjaer is completely silent about multiple suction boxes. Accordingly, Damkjaer does not disclose three suction boxes each disposed at a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes having guide elements for the conveyor belt. Therefore, it is respectfully noted that the Examiner's comments that Damkjaer discloses three suction boxes with three guide elements, are in error.

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Furthermore, the Examiner points to column 4, lines 24-42 of Damkjaer. However, the disclosure to which the Examiner refers does not disclose a suction box, the disclosure only pertains to the chain link (1') (Figs. 3a-3c). It is respectfully noted that the Examiner has not provided any indication as the parts of Damkjaer, which the Examiner considers to be suction boxes.

It is a requirement for a *prima facie* case of obviousness, that the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

The references do not show or suggest three suction boxes each disposed at a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes having guide elements for the conveyor belt, as recited in claim 10 of the instant application.

In item 7 of the Office action, the Examiner correctly stated that Rasmussen does not disclose three suction boxes each disposed at a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes having guide elements for the conveyor belt.

As seen from the above-given remarks, the Damkjaer reference discloses a vacuum is provided to all of the links. Damkjaer does not disclose that three vacuum boxes are each disposed at

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a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes having guide elements for the conveyor belt. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which three suction boxes are each disposed at a respective one of the three conveying segments, the suction boxes have guide elements for the conveyor belt.

The references applied by the Examiner do not teach or suggest all the claim limitations. Therefore, it is believed that the Examiner has not produced a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

It is appreciatively noted that claims 7 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The claims have not been amended as indicated by the Examiner, as the claims are believed to be patentable in their existing form.

In item 8 on page 7 of the Office action, the Examiner stated that applicant appears to be attempting to use means plus function in claims 1-12. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner. To invoke 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph, the claim limitations must use the phrase "means for" or "step for". None of the claims of the instant application use

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"means for" or "step for". Therefore, applicant is not attempting to invoke 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 10-12 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

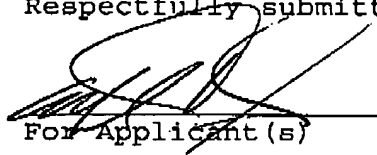
If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

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Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner &
Greenberg P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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For Applicant(s)

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